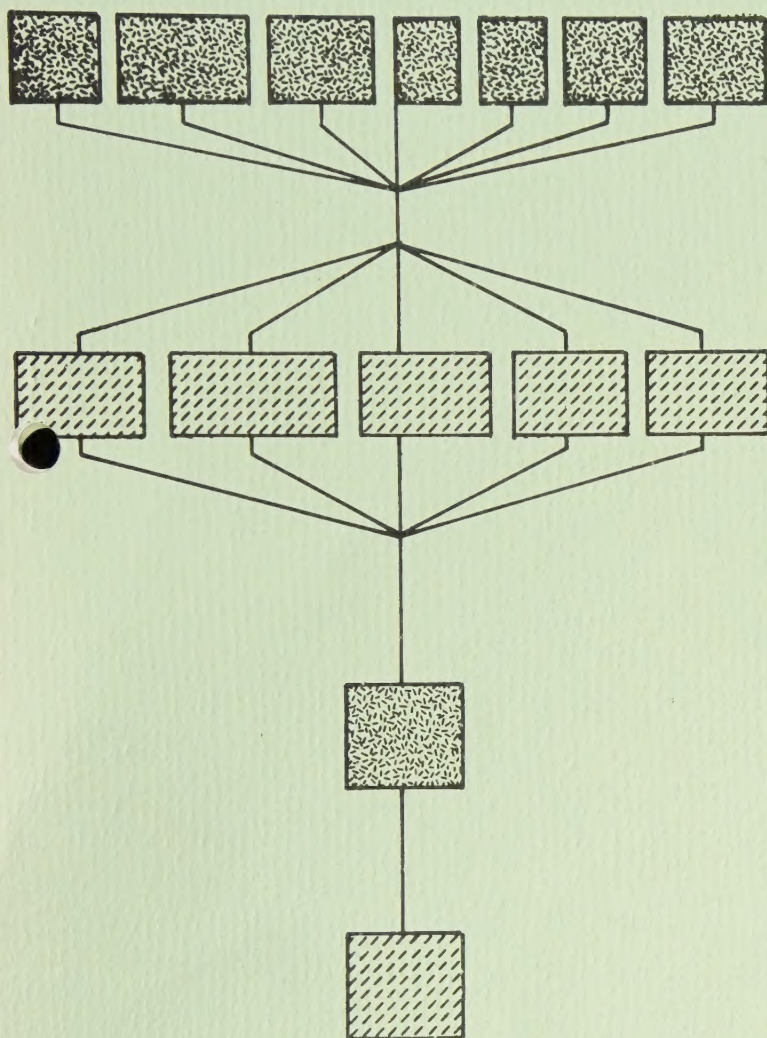


City of Merced

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN



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scenic highways

Prepared by
Merced City Planning Department
Merced, California

January, 1976

C I T Y O F M E R C E D

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CITY OF MERCED
Planning Commission

RESOLUTION #1150

WHEREAS, the Merced City Planning Commission at its regular meeting of December 3, 1975, considered a re-edited version of the Scenic Highways Element of the City of Merced Environmental Resources Management Plan (ERMP), a portion of the General Plan; and,

WHEREAS, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impact of the preliminary Scenic Highways Element, among others, when the ERMP was approved by the Merced City Planning Commission and adopted by the Merced City Council in 1974; and,

WHEREAS, the re-edited version of the Scenic Highways Element does not by virtue of the changes to its text reflect any potential or prospective change in environmental impact not previously evaluated, thus requiring no further environmental assessment; and,

WHEREAS, upon due public notice a public hearing was conducted on December 3, 1975; and,

WHEREAS, one person spoke regarding the Scenic Highways Element and no written comments were received; and,

WHEREAS, the Merced City Planning Commission made the following findings:

1. The prospective reorganization of the ERMP portion of the Merced City General Plan, including the re-edited Scenic Highways Element, would appear to provide for a reduction of prospective reproduction costs when the element(s) involved is reprinted.
2. The shorter version will hopefully be more readable (from a time standpoint) and thus will receive greater public attention.
3. The preparation of an individual element under separate cover (in lieu of the original ERMP that contained five elements under one cover) will allow for wider, less costly distribution for citizens interested in particular elements.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Merced City Planning Commission does approve the re-edited version of the Scenic Highways Element of the Merced Environmental Resources Management Plan (ERMP), a portion of the Merced General Plan, reduced in size and designed for reproduction under separate cover, and recommends that the Merced City Council adopt the Scenic Highways Element as approved.


Upon motion by Commissioner Hart, seconded by Commissioner Weber, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Passovoy, Dixon, Weber, Hart, Irwin, Riggs, Chairman Fisher

NOES: None


ABSENT: None

Adopted this 3rd day of December, 1975



Chairman, Planning Commission of the
City of Merced, California

ATTEST:



Secretary

RESOLUTION NO. 76-9

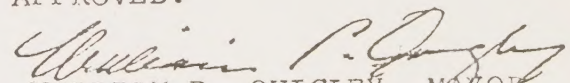
GENERAL PLAN - AMENDING SCENIC HIGHWAYS
ELEMENT AND CONSERVATION ELEMENT

BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Merced
as follows:

1. The re-edited version of the Scenic Highways element of the General Plan of the City of Merced, as approved by the Planning Commission Resolution No. 1150, is hereby approved and made part of the General Plan of the City of Merced in accordance with the provisions of Government Code §65357.
2. The re-edited and amended version of the Conservation Element of the General Plan of the City of Merced, as approved by the Planning Commission Resolution No. 1151, is hereby approved and made part of the General Plan of the City of Merced in accordance with the provisions of Government Code §65357.
3. The City Clerk shall endorse upon the General Plan of the City of Merced the fact of the amendment of the above named elements by this resolution and the date of such amendment.

Duly and regularly adopted by the City Council at its regular meeting held January 19, 1976.

APPROVED:


WILLIAM P. QUIGLEY, MAYOR

ATTEST:

ALLAN R. SCHELL, CITY CLERK

BY:

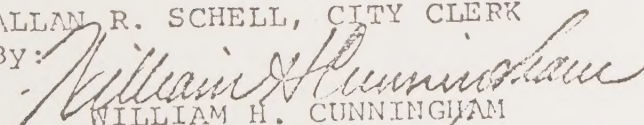

WILLIAM H. CUNNINGHAM
DEPUTY CITY CLERK

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*The NOISE ELEMENT is one of five elements

- I. Conservation Element
- II. Scenic Highways Element
- III. Seismic Safety/Safety Element
- IV. Noise Element
- V. Open Space Element

that together form the City of Merced's Environmental Resources Management Plan (ERMP), Volume 1 of the City's General Plan.

Pages herein are identified by a combination of Roman numerals (indicating the number of this particular element) and Arabic numerals (indicating the actual page number).

The Open Space Plan Map referred to can be found in the Open Space Element.

SCENIC HIGHWAYS ELEMENT

It is paradoxical that the cities, man's greatest creation and the place where most people must live, are in many ways becoming least suited for human occupancy.

- Raymond Dasmann -

The Scenic Highways Element, as delineated by State Law, is intended to provide a plan and program for the identification and protection of scenic corridors along elements of the State and County Scenic Highways System. The nearest existing State scenic highways are in the foothills of western Merced County; Interstate 5, as it traverses Merced County, and State Highway 152, west from San Luis Reservoir, are the only established scenic highways within the county.

While there are no officially designated scenic highways within the planning area, there are some outstanding scenic corridors, such as Bear Creek Drive, which pass through scenic areas containing unique natural and/or cultural features and eucalyptus-lined "M" Street as it approaches Merced College.

THE SCENIC CITY

Many people have a tendency to overlook the everyday beauties of their city. As unfortunate as this may seem, it is not always the fault of the individual but rather the city itself. Street widening, channel "improving," construction projects, etc., have had little or no regard for natural vegetation or cultural features. Trees and other vegetation are viewed as being a hindrance to "progress" rather than an asset to beauty. Historically significant buildings which add variety and intrigue to the urban scene are destroyed with only lip service given to their preservation. Glaring billboards and flashing DON'T WALK signs are incompatible with urban enhancement and help create an overall chaotic bleakness about city corridors.

Hopefully, Merced can avoid such a situation by the establishment of Scenic Corridors within the city. Although this obviously will not solve many of the above-mentioned problems, it can be a precedent-setting step toward substantial enhancement of the community.

CRITERIA FOR ESTABLISHMENT

To promote this cause and to establish a basic scenic corridor system, criteria for identifying local scenic corridors have been developed based upon standards established by the State Scenic Highway Advisory Committee.* It contains the following guidelines:

- 1) The scenic area through which the corridor passes should possess outstanding scenic, historic, or aesthetic value.
- 2) The scenic area through which the corridor passes should have consistent scenic, historic, or aesthetic value during all seasons.
- 3) If possible, the scenic corridor should contain a variety of vegetation or landscape types.
- 4) Routes of historic significance which connect places of interest should be considered even though the route is of marginal scenic value.
- 5) Routes which incorporate outstanding views or vistas should be considered.

Using the above criteria several scenic corridors have been considered. They are:

- a. North Bear Creek Drive within the City limits.
- b. "N" Street from 16th to County Court House.
- c. Twenty-First Street from the County Court House to Glen Avenue.
- d. "M" Street from Black Rascal Creek to Merced College.
- e. West 28th Street from Mercy Hospital to "G" Street.

*F. Darrel Husum, Program Coordinator, The Scenic Route, A Guide for the Official Designation of Eligible Scenic Highways, State of California Division of Highways, Sacramento, California, September, 1970.

- f. Hatch Road from Yosemite Avenue to Cardella Road.
- g. Lake Road from Yosemite Avenue to Bellevue Road.
- h. Yosemite Lake park roads.
- i. Applegate Drive on Bear Creek.

From the above list, the most appropriate and most significant scenic drives have been chosen and are shown on the Open Space Plan Map.* They are a, b, c, and d, above. This list will likely be expanded in the future.

SPECIFIC PLANS AND CORRIDOR PROTECTION

Specific plans for each of the designated scenic corridors are forthcoming and will be as comprehensive as possible. Until these specific plans are completed, any development or proposal occurring within 150 feet** of any designated Scenic Corridor as shown on the Open Space Plan Map should carefully be considered in the light of this element. In the mean time, a preliminary list of protective measures for these scenic corridors is given below:

1) Undergrounding of utilities

New or relocated utility lines should be placed underground whenever feasible. Consideration should also be given to the underground placement or other relocation of existing overhead lines.

2) Stringent Sign Control

The size, height, number, and type of on-premise signs allowed should be the minimum necessary for identification and reflect the proportionate and orderly appearance of advertising in relation to the environment. The design, materials, colors, texture, and/or location should also relate to their surrounding physical environment. No off-premise outdoor advertising should be permitted, and provisions should be made for eliminating non-conformities.

3) Regulating Future Land Uses

Regulating land uses to prevent the incursion of incompatible uses, which may detract from the scenic quality of the corridor is essential.

* The Open Space Plan Map appears in the Open Space Element of the Environmental Resources Management Plan.

** 150 feet is the normal depth of many city lots.

By limiting densities and access along these corridors the "scenic experience" will be enhanced.

4) Screening of Offensive Land Uses

Existing or indispensable offensive land uses should be screened from view, or inconspicuously located if within a scenic corridor. Effective screening can be accomplished by proper use of planting, grading and fencing.

5) Preserving Views of Vistas

Heights and setbacks of buildings should be regulated so as not to obstruct outstanding views.

6) Preserving Vegetative Cover

Every effort should be made to preserve existing stands of trees and other plant materials of outstanding value, and maintain them properly.

7) Property Maintenance

Structures on private or public properties visible within the corridor should be maintained in good conditions. The grounds should be kept free from trash, undesirable growth, or other objectionable uses.

8) Development Design

Architectural and landscape architectural design and site planning should result in an attractive appearance and a harmonious relationship with surrounding development.

9) Vehicle Control

Over-crowding of vehicles onto scenic corridors should be avoided. The use of corridors for major collector streets or higher order streets should be avoided where possible.

CORRIDOR ESTABLISHMENT

With the adoption of this element together with the Open Space Plan Map, Scenic Corridors shown on the Open Space Plan Map shall be officially designated as Scenic Corridors. The specific plans for each corridor will incorporate comprehensive enhancement, protection, and control measures. Also the costs of establishment and maintenance will be covered in these specific plans. Hopefully, this will involve citizen input.

These corridors also have potential for multiple uses. Bicycle paths and footpaths which are physically separate from automobile traffic are very possible and desirable on some of these corridors. In the specific plans for each of the corridors, much emphasis will be placed on multiple use by many modes of travel. Bike trails along scenic corridors should be integrated into any other proposed or existing bike trail systems so that they can provide scenic as well as functional bicycle mobility. As the direct and indirect costs of automobile travel increase, bicycle and pedestrian travel will undoubtedly take a greater role in transportation. With the incorporation of bicycle and pedestrian paths along scenic corridors, they will be able to provide not only a functional means of mobility, but qualitative experience as well.

SCENIC HIGHWAY POLICIES

1. To establish the corridors shown on the Open Space Plan Map (Map 14)* as officially designated Scenic Corridors.
2. To pursue the development of specific plans for each Scenic Corridor using the guidelines as outlined in this Scenic Highways Element of the Environmental Resources Management Plan and other sources as well. These specific plans will incorporate comprehensive enhancement, protection, and control measures and provide a means for citizen participation.
3. To encourage the multiple use of Scenic Corridors and other transportation rights-of-way for such uses as walkways, bicycle paths, rest areas, etc.

*Map 14 appears in the Open Space Element of the Environmental Resources Management Plan.

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